

PYRETHROID PESTICIDES

What are pyrethroid pesticides?

Pyrethrum is a compound extracted from chrysanthemum flowers. It has been used as an insecticide since the first century.

Pyrethroids are synthetic variations of naturally found pyrethrums. The advantage to creating pyrethrins in the laboratory is that the compounds tend to be more potent and last longer in the environment, two properties desired for pest control. Pyrethroid pesticides are used in agriculture, mosquito control, lawn and garden care, and in veterinary care. Some pyrethroids are permethrin, resmethrin, fenvalerate, cyfluthrin, sumethrin, and barthrin.

How can pyrethroid pesticides exhaust affect my health?

Pyrethroid pesticides interfere with cell respiration, the process that the body uses to create energy from food and which sustains life.

How can people be exposed to pyrethroid pesticides?

Pyrethroids are used in many household insecticides. They provide quick “knockdown” action and rapidly degrade in heat and sunlight. This eliminates their usefulness in agricultural pest control. Pyrethroids are relatively non-toxic to mammals and birds; however, they are highly toxic to aquatic organisms and bees.

You could be exposed to PAHs through:

- **Breathing** — Short-term exposure may produce dermatitis, numbness of lips and tongue, sneezing, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headache, lack of coordination, convulsions, central nervous system depression, and death due to respiratory failure.
- **Long-term exposure** to pyrethroids may produce anorexia, skin sensitization, and immune system damage. There are indications that some pyrethroids may be carcinogenic.

What should I do if exposed to pyrethroid pesticides?

Seek immediate medical attention if you are exposed to pyrethroid pesticides.

Is there a medical test to show whether I was exposed to pyrethroid pesticides?

Physicians can use limited medical tests to determine exposure. Many tests, such as urine or blood, are only applicable if a person was exposed to a large quantity.

Resources

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Pesticide Program – Pesticide Health and Safety - <http://epa.gov/pesticides/about/types.htm>

National Pesticide Information Center, Fact Sheet on Resmethrin, <http://www.npic.orst.edu/factsheets/ResTech.pdf>

Poison Control Center 24/7 Emergency Contact Number: 1-800-222-1222
DPH 24/7 Contact Number: 1-888-295-5156

Revised: 03/2023

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